



Rural Transit Assistance Program Scholarship Guidelines

How to get a training scholarship from Washington State's Rural Transit Assistance Program

What is the scholarship program?

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is responsible for administering the Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) with funding provided by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The RTAP program supports a variety of services including the provision of technical assistance and training to meet the specific needs of transportation operators in non-urbanized areas. Included in those services is the provision of scholarships to cover tuition and expenses for individuals to attend training courses, workshops, and conferences.

What is the purpose of the scholarship?

The purpose of the scholarship program is to provide funding support to eligible agencies to help defray the cost of sending personnel to approved training courses, workshops, and conferences. The intent of the program is to supplement existing training resources, not to supplant them.

Who is eligible for a scholarship?

- Eligible transportation agencies include:
- Recipients of FTA 5310 and 5311 grants
- Rural transportation providers
- Small urban transportation providers (on a space available basis, or at the discretion of the RTAP Coordinator)
- Providers of special needs transportation services
- Officers and staff of the Washington State Transit Association (WSTA) and the Community Transportation Association of the Northwest (CTA-NW)
- Others at the discretion of the RTAP Coordinator

What are the requirements?

To receive a RTAP training scholarship, you must meet the following requirements:

- The training or conference you wish to participate in must further the development of the professional skills and abilities of rural, small urban, and specialized transportation providers in Washington state.
- The request for a scholarship must be sponsored by an agency, and signed by the chief executive officer of the agency.
- Before your training, you must have a copy of an approved WSDOT expense worksheet signed by the manager of the Public Transportation Office.

Who makes decisions about the scholarships?

The RTAP Coordinator reviews each application and awards the scholarships. Criteria used in that determination include:

- Justification in terms of financial need and anticipated value to the agency.
- Relevance of training to the individual's job at the agency.
- Financial contributions provided by the agency.
- Amount of funds requested.
- Agency and individual scholarships previously received within the last year.
- Availability of funds remaining in the scholarship program budget.
- Preference will be given to event sites located in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

What will a training scholarship cover?

RTAP training scholarships will reimburse you at the state rate for the following expenses:

- Training or conference registration
- Travel costs, such as airfare, mileage, parking and ground transportation.
- Lodging at the state rate – information on state rates can be found at <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/policy/10.90.htm#10.90>)

RTAP scholarships will not cover the cost of food.

How does a scholarship work?

1. Send an application with estimated expenses, to the RTAP Coordinator.
2. After reviewing the application, if appropriate, WSDOT will approve your scholarship; then using state travel rates, we will calculate the expenses the scholarship will cover. Information on state rates can found at:
<http://www.ofm.wa.gov/policy/10.90.htm#10.90>
3. You will know that your scholarship has been approved when you receive an approved RTAP Expense Worksheet.
4. Following your training or conference, return the original expense worksheet signed by your chief executive officer, with all relevant receipts, and a written summary on the training/conference you attended. **Reimbursements will only be done within 60 days of the training/conference.**
5. RTAP will only pay up to the amount that was first agreed upon. All other costs over the approved amount will be the responsibility of the recipient's agency or organization.

How much funding is available?

RTAP will reimburse for approved scholarships based upon the following guidelines:

- Costs up to \$500 are reimbursed at 100 percent.
- Additional costs of \$501-\$2,500 will be reimbursed at 50 percent.
- All costs beyond \$2,500 are the responsibility of the recipient's agency/organization.
- Total reimbursement will not exceed \$1,500 per scholarship.
- There is a limit of three scholarships per individual per year.
- There is a limit of three individuals from a single agency, per training opportunity.
- Exceptions to these limits are at the discretion of the RTAP Coordinator and must be applied for in writing at the time the scholarships are requested.

When are applications due?

You must send a scholarship application to the RTAP Coordinator at least one month before the training or conference begins.

What about special events?

WSDOT recognizes that certain conferences have special value to transportation providers in Washington State. For those events, a specific number of scholarships will be set aside to encourage participation. The RTAP coordinator, in consultation with the Washington State Transportation Training Coalition, will determine the number of scholarships. Members of the Coalition include WSTA, CTA-NW, and the Washington State Insurance Pool (WSTIP).

The RTAP coordinator may offer a specific number of scholarships to WSTA and CTA-NW and require each to submit a prioritized list of candidates that meet scholarship eligibility standards. The RTAP Coordinator will make the final award from those lists. Special events include:

- The annual Washington State Public Transportation Conference
- The annual Community Transportation Association of America Conference
- The annual American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Conference
- The annual APTA General Manager's Conference
- The annual APTA Board of Director's Conference
- The Transportation Research Board's Rural Transportation Conference

What if I want a scholarship but don't meet the requirements?

The RTAP Coordinator can make an exception to many of the requirements. To be considered as an exception, send a request in writing one month before the training or conference.

How do I apply for a scholarship?

Complete the designated RTAP application form, including your estimated expenses. Be sure that your agency's chief executive officer signs it.

Send your application using either of the following methods. Fax it to 360-705-6820 or you can mail it to the address below.

Seija Blaylock
RTAP Coordinator
Washington State Department of Transportation
PO Box 47387
Olympia, WA 98504-7387

How do I get my reimbursement?

- Return the **original** copy of the WSDOT approved expense worksheet, signed by your chief executive officer confirming your attendance at the conference/training.
- Include a written report summarizing the training you received.
- Attach all receipts for your eligible expenses.
- Mail to the WSDOT, Public Transportation Office (at the above address) within 60 days of your training/conference.

You will not be reimbursed if your signed application, report, and receipts have not been received within 60 days of the training.

Have a question?

For questions about the RTAP scholarship program, contact Seija Blaylock, the RTAP Coordinator, at (360) 705-7923 or blaylos@wsdot.wa.gov.